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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Draft programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 48/183 of 21 December 1993, proclaimed 1996 International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. At its forty-ninth session, the Assembly, in its resolution 49/110 of 19 December 1994, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (A/49/572) and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with all States, concerned specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations system, relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and interested groups, to achieve at an early date the elaboration of the draft programme concerning the preparations for and observance of the Year, containing the objectives, principles, themes and main recommendations for the Year, which should be consistent with the challenge of poverty and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 1/ and to submit a final report thereon to the Assembly for consideration at its fiftieth session, with the aim of ensuring that the Year makes a distinct and significant contribution to the efforts to eradicate poverty.

2. In response to resolution 49/110 and to facilitate an initial exchange of views at the substantive session of 1995 of the Economic and Social Council on a possible programme to observe the Year, the Secretariat prepared a note containing elements of a draft programme for the Year. 2/ The draft programme took into account, and followed closely, the Copenhagen Declaration and

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Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. It also reflected the resolutions and decisions adopted at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the thirty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development, and the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as the results of informal consultations within the United Nations system and with concerned non-governmental organizations.

3. The present report elaborates on the proposals contained in the above-mentioned note, taking into account the observations and suggestions made subsequently in response to the note verbale of the Secretary-General of June 1995 addressed to Member States, as well as additional information provided by entities of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

II. OVERALL ORIENTATION

4. Subsequent to the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 48/183 and 49/110, the heads of State and Government at the World Summit for Social Development launched a global drive for social progress and development embodied in 10 commitments. 3/ Commitment 2 reads in part as follows: "We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind". 4/ To this end, heads of State and Government undertook to formulate or strengthen, as a matter of urgency, and preferably by the year 1996, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, national policies and strategies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty in the shortest possible time, reducing inequalities and eradicating absolute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context. 5/

5. In chapter II of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, a strategy for the eradication of poverty is outlined, containing suggestions for priority action at the national level as well as supporting activities at the international level. The Programme of Action calls on Governments to increase public efforts to eradicate absolute poverty and to reduce overall poverty substantially, inter alia, by formulating or strengthening, preferably by 1996, and implementing national poverty eradication plans to address the structural causes of poverty, encompassing action on the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels. These plans should establish, within each national context, strategies and affordable time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty. In the context of national plans, particular attention should be given to employment creation as a means of eradicating poverty, giving appropriate consideration to health and education, assigning a higher priority to basic social services, generating household income and promoting access to productive assets and economic opportunities. 6/ Public efforts to eradicate poverty should also be increased by elaborating, at the national level, the measurements, criteria and indicators for determining the extent and distribution of absolute poverty. Each country should develop a precise definition and assessment of absolute poverty, preferably by 1996.

6. In chapter V of the Programme of Action on implementation and follow-up, among the requirements specified for the promotion of an integrated approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level, in accordance with national specificities, is formulating or strengthening, by 1996, comprehensive cross-sectoral strategies for implementing the Summit outcome and national strategies for social development, including government action, actions by States in cooperation with other Governments, international, regional and subregional organizations, and actions taken in partnership and cooperation with actors of civil society, the private sector and cooperatives, with specific responsibilities to be undertaken by each actor and with agreed priorities and time-frames. 7/

7. The Programme of Action also calls on the General Assembly to review, in 1996, the effectiveness of the steps taken to implement the outcome of the Summit with regard to poverty eradication, as part of the activities relating to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Furthermore, it also calls on the General Assembly at its fiftieth session to declare the first United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty, following the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996), with a view to its considering further initiatives on the eradication of poverty. 8/

8. The concept of poverty developed in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development is broad. Poverty is not just inadequate income, but also includes lack of access to education, health care and other amenities, and exclusion from participation in the life of the community.

9. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development emphasize the need to focus efforts and policies on the root causes of poverty and the necessity to provide for the basic needs of all. These include the elimination of hunger and malnutrition; the provision of food security, education, employment and livelihood, primary health-care services, including reproductive health care, safe drinking water and sanitation, and adequate shelter; and participation in social and cultural life. Special priority should be given to the needs and rights of women and children, who often bear the greatest burden of poverty, and to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and persons. The Programme of Action also stresses that people living in poverty should have access to productive resources, including credit, land, education and training, technology, knowledge and information, as well as to public services, and should be able to participate in the elaboration of policies and the creation of a regulatory environment that would expand employment and economic opportunities. In addition, all people must be provided with adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, child-bearing, widowhood, disability and old age. 9/

10. The texts adopted at Copenhagen link the reduction of poverty with the reduction of inequalities. Opportunities for access to resources and income should be enhanced, and political, legal, economic and social factors and constraints that foster and sustain inequality should be removed. Furthermore, national budgets and policies should be oriented, as necessary, towards meeting

basic needs, reducing inequalities and targeting poverty, as a strategic objective.

III. OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES AND THEME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

11. The overarching objective of the Year may appropriately be derived from the decisions of the General Assembly that lead up to the proclamation of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. In particular, the Assembly in its resolution 49/110 reaffirms that the major activities for the observance of the Year should be undertaken at all levels and that assistance should be provided by the United Nations system with a view to creating among States, policy makers and international public opinion a greater awareness of the fact that the eradication of poverty is both a complex and a multidimensional problem and fundamental to reinforcing peace and achieving sustainable development.

12. The significance of the activities to be undertaken during the Year should be judged largely on the extent to which they succeed in focusing attention, at all levels and among all sections in society, on the need to take seriously the substantive objective of eradicating poverty and instilling in the public consciousness that this is a reachable goal within a reasonable time span. Thus the aim of the activities during the Year should be to build the support structure for a longer term, sustained effort to implement the commitments undertaken and the basic programme already agreed upon at the World Summit for Social Development. The Declaration and Programme of Action agreed upon at Copenhagen established the necessary policies and actions to eradicate poverty, and the focus of the Year should thus be to ensure its timely implementation.

13. To this end, activities at all levels, national and international, public and private, might be guided by the following principles:

(a) The eradication of poverty requires a sustained, collective commitment and effort by national and local governments, civil society, business and corporations, supported by the international community, including in particular, regional and international organizations;

(b) The eradication of poverty requires measures to ensure that people living in poverty have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to escape from poverty, as well as measures to ensure that all members of society are protected from poverty as a result of illness, loss of employment, natural disaster or other misfortune;

(c) The eradication of poverty requires that all have access to basic social services and can participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life of society;

(d) The eradication of poverty requires that women be given the economic and social opportunities to contribute to development and that anti-poverty strategies and programmes be designed with a specific gender dimension;

(e) The eradication of poverty requires the development of targeted programmes to meet the needs of particular social and demographic groups, including young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and other groups or persons with special needs;

(f) The eradication of poverty requires that anti-poverty strategies and programmes be designed, implemented and monitored with the full participation of people living in poverty;

(g) The eradication of poverty requires increased and more effective support by the international community for broad-based development in developing countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries.

14. In the light of General Assembly resolutions 48/183 and 49/110 and of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Assembly may wish to adopt a theme for the Year. The theme might be "Poverty can be and must be eradicated throughout the world". The implementation of this theme would require a sustained, long-term commitment by Governments and all other actors in society, as well as the support of the international community.

IV. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

15. In the light of the above-mentioned decisions and recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference for Women, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Children, the following major activities are proposed for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty:

(a) Every country should, with the support of the international community, formulate or strengthen a long-term national strategy for eradicating poverty;

(b) National and international organizations, including educational institutions, the media and other institutions of civil society, should promote awareness of the extent and nature of poverty, its destructive consequences both for the people concerned and for society as a whole, and effective measures for reducing and eradicating poverty;

(c) Countries and international organizations should increase support for research and dissemination of information on the extent and distribution of poverty, on its causes and consequences and on effective measures for reducing and eradicating poverty;

(d) Countries and international organizations should organize and participate in meetings to exchange information on their achievements and problems in reducing and eradicating poverty;

(e) Countries should encourage the development of community organizations, particularly in communities with a high incidence of poverty, and encourage and

support participation of such organizations in efforts to eradicate poverty and in the activities of the Year.

16. Furthermore, in accordance with the recommendation of the World Summit for Social Development, the General Assembly could, at its fiftieth session, declare the first United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty, following the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, with a view to its considering further initiatives on the eradication of poverty; the United Nations, other international organizations and Member States should then develop plans and programmes for the decade.

17. Based on the experience of years and decades and other similar events organized under the auspices of the United Nations system, which are intended principally to create awareness and promote understanding of critical issues and mobilize resources and action at all levels, examples of possible activities are listed in the following paragraphs. These are followed by a summary of special activities for the observance of the Year planned by the United Nations system in support of national and local-level activities.

A. Activities that may be undertaken at the national and local levels

18. A coordinated approach by Governments, at national and sub-national levels, as well as the widest possible participation of the different private groups and actors in society, would best help to ensure progress towards eradicating poverty. Such a coordinated approach could be facilitated by the establishment of national coordinating mechanisms, with both governmental and non-governmental representation. Where such coordinating mechanisms were already set up to assist national preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, they might form the nucleus of organizational arrangements for preparing and monitoring national strategies to follow up the commitments and recommendations relating to the Summit objective of eradicating poverty. Coordinating bodies, or similar mechanisms at the national level, could also be responsible for disseminating information about the objectives, guiding principles and theme of the Year, particularly at the local level; encouraging actions within the community in observance of the Year; and, especially in respect of possible local-level initiatives, elaborating long-term strategies in the context of a United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty.

19. The dissemination of information is critical to any publicity campaign. Thus, in order to create a wide forum for the exchange of experiences and discussion of problems and solutions, and to mobilize public awareness, enhance participation, and stimulate action and cooperation to promote the objectives of the Year, the responsible national authorities should seek:

(a) The active involvement of the media and other sources of public information and opinion from the earliest stage onwards;

(b) The organization of a regular, up-to-date information provision and exchange system;

(c) The creation, production, distribution and use of printed, visual and audio information materials (databases, guides for action, inventories of action, progress reports, booklets, recurrent bulletins/newsletters, circular letters, press releases, press kits, posters, coins, stamps, souvenirs, television and radio programmes, video and audio cassettes);

(d) The involvement of prominent citizens in different walks of life in promoting the Year's objectives, theme and activities.

20. Activities need to encourage outreach to and the involvement of people living in poverty and their organizations in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies and programmes for poverty eradication and community-based development, ensuring that such programmes reflect their priorities. Examples of specific activities to this end are:

(a) Encouragement and support for local community development projects that foster the skill, self-reliance and self-confidence of people living in poverty and that facilitate their active participation in efforts to eradicate poverty;

(b) Support for the creation and development of community organizations and non-profit non-governmental organizations, particularly among the disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the spheres of poverty, education, health, social integration, human rights, improvement of the quality of life and relief and rehabilitation, thus enabling them to participate constructively in policy-making and implementation;

(c) Effective participation of such organizations as part of national coordinating mechanisms for observance of the Year, and provision to them of comprehensive information and other facilitative support;

(d) Provision of resources through such measures as small grant programmes and technical and other administrative support for initiatives taken and managed at the community level;

(e) Identification of existing national and international non-governmental organizations most concerned with the objectives, principles and themes of the Year and establishment of close collaboration and partnership with them.

21. The development of national policies to ensure that people living in poverty have access to basic social services, to economic opportunities that promote sustainable livelihood and to social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, disability and old age may be facilitated by the following measures:

(a) Review and appraisal of existing legal systems, programmes and services and their impact on the poor;

(b) Removal of any political, legal, economic and social factors, constraints and structural barriers that foster and sustain inequality in society and prevent people from escaping poverty;

(c) Promotion of effective enjoyment by all people of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and access to existing social protection and public services, in particular through encouraging the ratification and ensuring the full implementation of relevant human rights instruments;

(d) Establishment of legislative and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements and consultative mechanisms for involving community organizations and non-profit non-governmental organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of social development strategies and programmes.

22. Research on the effectiveness of different approaches to poverty eradication, and the dissemination of research results, is critical. The Year could help to stimulate action by encouraging:

(a) The active involvement of academic, research and educational institutions in observation of the Year, including in the work of the national coordinating mechanisms;

(b) The development, updating and dissemination of specific indicators of poverty and vulnerability, including income, wealth, nutrition, physical and mental health, education, literacy, family conditions, unemployment, social exclusion and isolation, homelessness, landlessness and other factors, as well as indicators of the national and international causes underlying poverty; for this purpose, the gathering of comprehensive and comparable data, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, disability, family status, language groupings, regions and economic and social sectors;

(c) Systematic monitoring and assessment of the achievement of goals and targets agreed to in international forums in the area of social development; evaluating, quantitatively and qualitatively, changes in poverty levels, the persistence of poverty and vulnerability to poverty, particularly concerning household income levels and access to resources and services; and assessing the effectiveness of poverty eradication strategies, based on the priorities and perceptions of households living in poverty and low-income communities;

(d) Identification of the livelihood systems, survival strategies and self-help organizations of people living in poverty and working with such organizations to develop programmes for combating poverty that build on their efforts, ensuring the full participation of the people concerned and responding to their actual needs;

(e) Elaboration, at the national level, of the measurements, criteria and indicators for determining the extent and distribution of absolute poverty, its precise definition and assessment;

(f) Mobilization of the resources of universities and research institutions to improve the understanding of the causes of poverty and their solutions, as well as the impact of structural adjustment measures on people living in poverty and the effectiveness of anti-poverty strategies and programmes, strengthening the capacity for social science research in developing countries and integrating, as appropriate, the results of research into decision-making processes;

(g) Organization of national congresses and conferences, expert seminars and workshops to provide a forum for the exchange of opinions, information and experiences and for submitting proposals for action.

23. An important tool for promoting the objectives of the Year is to encourage the involvement in poverty eradication activities, through targeted campaigns, of different actors of society, such as business enterprises, trade unions, farmers' organizations and cooperatives. Activities could emphasize the importance of:

(a) Developing planning and policy-making procedures that facilitate partnership and cooperation between Governments and other actors of society in social development;

(b) Encouraging business enterprises to pursue investment and other policies, including non-commercial activities, that will contribute to social development, especially in relation to the generation of work opportunities, social support services at the workplace, access to productive resources and construction of infrastructure.

B. Activities for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty planned by the United Nations system

24. Poverty has been a major concern, directly or indirectly, in the work of the entities of the United Nations system from the inception of the Organization. In the context of the United Nations Development Decades, and, more recently, in the context of the agenda for development, combating poverty has received critical attention. Following the decision by the General Assembly to convene a World Summit for Social Development, the different entities of the United Nations system have focused attention on how best to develop comprehensive approaches that would bring to bear, in an integrated manner, the different skills and experiences of the various agencies to the common goal of eradicating poverty. With the proclamation of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the programmes, organs and specialized agencies have initiated, or are planning, special events and activities to promote the objectives of the Year. Information on these activities, as provided by the entities of the system and available at this point in time, is summarized below. Other regular activities related to the fight against poverty are listed in the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries (A/50/396).

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

25. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development was designated by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/183 as the preparatory body for the Year. During the Year itself, the Department will be responsible for providing substantive support for the monitoring, in the context of the inter-agency machinery, of the activities to observe the Year. The Department will support a number of substantive and information activities relating to its responsibilities in the areas of sustainable development, women and social

groups, social integration and social welfare, including the preparation of a special issue of the International Social Development Review devoted to poverty and a newsletter.

26. Close contacts will be maintained with the non-governmental community participating in events to observe the Year. The World Summit for Social Development emphasized the essential role played by actors of civil society in the struggle against poverty and called in particular for a strengthening of "actions taken in partnership and cooperation with actors of civil society, the private sector and cooperatives". 10/ In the light of General Assembly resolutions 48/183 and 49/110 and of the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development addressed a letter to international non-governmental organizations that took part in the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development. The aim of this letter was to emphasize the significance of the active participation of all actors of society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in the struggle against poverty; to inform them about the main activities the United Nations intended to undertake to observe the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996; and to ask for their cooperation in that respect.

Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

27. Many of the population activities of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis have a direct bearing on poverty. The analytical studies of the Population Division of the social and economic causes and consequences of fertility, mortality and migration, relate to poverty issues. The Division's work programme in this field also includes a review of conceptual approaches to poverty and its measurement, and the interplay between demographic characteristics of the poor and the equivalence measures that underpin many of the poverty indicators. Some other relevant activities might be added to the work programme of the Department in the course of the year.

Department for Development Support and Management Services

28. The Department for Development Support and Management Services will do its utmost to cooperate with the family of the United Nations agencies to attain the objectives of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. It supports the idea that inter-agency teams should be placed at the disposal of developing countries that wish to formulate anti-poverty programmes and national strategies for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. A number of projects of the Department related to the issue of poverty will come to fruition in 1996. They include: a study of poverty in the Arab region; poverty and the environment in Thailand, Viet Nam and Laos; social mapping of indigenous communities in Indonesia; and poverty alleviation in Tanzania. In order to assess the policy relevance of these projects, a workshop will be organized towards the end of 1996.

Department of Public Information

29. The responsibility of the Department of Public Information in relation to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty is to raise awareness about the work of the United Nations in this field. One possible activity is a series of regional work media briefings on the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, emphasizing the issue of poverty eradication, to be organized in cooperation with the Government of Denmark early next year on the first anniversary of the Summit. A number of United Nations information centres will utilize the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17 October, as well as the Year itself, to undertake activities to promote the work of the United Nations on the eradication of poverty. Members of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, chaired by the Department of Public Information, will collaborate and coordinate system-wide public information activities relating to the Year. The Department will also produce and disseminate an extended background on the issues related to poverty eradication and a brochure on the aims and purposes of the Year which will include a calendar of United Nations system-wide activities being planned during the Year. These products, in English, French and Spanish, will be disseminated through the network of 67 United Nations information centres and services, as well as field offices of the United Nations system, to media, non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, national ministries, educational institutions and other members of civil society. A logo for the Year has been designed and selected. In addition, work is under way on a signature campaign (typeface, colours, masthead) for use on all products related to the Year.

Economic Commission for Europe

30. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) might include in its programme of work an appropriate segment related to the issue of poverty, in particular in the fields of economic analysis and projections, human settlements, migration and statistics. ECE is also considering organizing some special events devoted to the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the business community. In cooperation with the International Council on Social Welfare, ECE will mark the World Habitat Day in October 1996 by an event devoted to urban poverty. A similar event is planned for the observance of the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October 1996.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

31. The main activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in connection with the observance of the Year, involve the preparation of statistical data and social indicators for analysing the social situation and designing anti-poverty programmes. A Panorama Social de America Latina will be published with key topics such as employment, income distribution, poverty and social and geographical location (rural and urban), as regards living conditions and opportunities for social mobility. The 1996 edition will expand the number of countries covered. Training will also be provided to national experts on the use of social indicators to identify the most disadvantaged social groups and determine their characteristics with respect to age, gender, kind of work, education and geographical location, and

to formulate alternative policies designed to alleviate poverty and improve living conditions. The Unit for the Integration of Women in Development will be monitoring progress achieved in the implementation of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2000, particularly those strategic actions aimed at substantially improving the conditions of the poor and at improving the quality of life of women, especially those in the poorest groups. The twenty-sixth session of the Commission will take place at San Jose, Costa Rica, from 15 to 20 April 1996.

Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific

32. At its fifty-first session, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted resolution 51/4 of 1 May 1995, entitled "Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region", in which the Commission requested the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, inter alia, to report to the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development, at its third session, to be held in 1996, on the effectiveness of the steps taken to implement the Agenda for Action, with specific reference to poverty alleviation, within the context of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. A report to that effect will be prepared by the secretariat, and it is envisaged that ESCAP members and associate members, as well as United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participating in the 1996 session of the Committee, will exchange views and experiences and decide on follow-up activities on the subject. The secretariat will convene in 1996 a meeting of senior officials on the implementation of the Agenda for Action, with special reference to the theme of poverty eradication and linkage with the observance of the Year. At its fifty-first session the Commission also decided that the theme of the fifty-second session would be "Sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Asia and the Pacific". In that connection, a study on rural poverty alleviation in the context of sustainable development will be prepared by the secretariat for consideration by the Commission in 1996.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

33. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organizing an expert group meeting on policies and measures to reduce income disparities and alleviate poverty in selected ESCWA countries, which will be held in December 1995. New documents ("Poverty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip", "Poverty in Western Asia: population dynamics and employment issues", "Measurement of poverty in the ESCWA region", "Poverty and housing in the ESCWA region", "Social factors of housing and poverty: Jordan case-study", etc.) will be presented and discussed at the meeting. Planned activities for 1996-1997 include: coordination with the International Labour Organization and the UNDP national office for Lebanon for building on the work undertaken in the country profile "poverty in Lebanon"; convening of an ad hoc expert group on eradicating poverty in Western Asia: towards a plan of action; and publication during the biennium of Eradicating Poverty in Western Asia.

United Nations Children's Fund

34. High infant mortality, widespread child malnutrition, and persistent female illiteracy are both manifestations and causes of poverty. In collaboration with other agencies and national institutions, the major activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1996 consist of reviewing and assessing social indicators on immunization, malnutrition, education, water and sanitation, and micro-nutrients in the majority of the countries in which UNICEF has programmes. This review will be available around mid-1996. In addition, measuring poverty and tracking poverty trends over time are crucial for formulating national strategies for poverty eradication and for identifying areas of policy and programme intervention. To accomplish this, UNICEF is collaborating with UNDP and the World Bank to provide better coordinated support to the programme countries as well as suggestions for the monitoring of poverty. Furthermore, in collaboration with interested Governments and relevant United Nations agencies, in particular UNDP and the World Bank, UNICEF will contribute to the monitoring of the 20/20 initiative through its support to the restructuring studies of government and donor budgets.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

35. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will organize a seminar on the effects of international economic relations on poverty and prepare a background paper. The participants will include both United Nations agency representatives and experts attending in their individual capacity. In order to make the findings of the seminar available in time for the discussions in 1996 during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on poverty eradication, UNCTAD proposes to hold the seminar at Geneva in March 1996.

United Nations Development Programme

36. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) welcomes the opportunity which this Year presents for building on the gains of the World Summit for Social Development, providing the impetus for the formulation of national strategies for poverty eradication and developing joint United Nations initiatives which would support the implementation of such strategies. UNDP sees the Year as a good opportunity for helping national partners to focus on the goals of poverty eradication and assisting Governments to deliver sound poverty eradication strategies and to give high visibility to the process. UNDP believes that its network of country offices could be used to support the objectives of the Year. In this regard, it sees a definite role for them in facilitating "dialogues with the poor".

37. Activities UNDP is likely to support, with Governments and United Nations partners, include development of national policy eradication strategies; working out country-specific definitions of poverty; and country-level poverty measurement/situation analyses. These activities will be carried out by UNDP country offices, which are expected to support Governments to make their poverty eradication strategies and plans as comprehensive and realistic as possible (i.e. develop clear national poverty definitions, identify poverty indicators, conduct poverty assessment studies where there are none, set time-bound targets,

develop monitoring systems, etc.) and to integrate these fully into national development plans. In relation to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, UNDP has prepared a document entitled "Poverty eradication: a policy framework for country strategies" as a contribution to the policy dialogue on development alternatives and priorities for the coming years. UNDP is also cooperating with the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat for a poverty eradication information campaign at the country level and will build the theme into its regular information/communication activities.

United Nations Population Fund

38. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is undertaking activities addressing the issue of poverty through its regular programme activities. The eradication of poverty is a theme in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in which an integrated approach to address the issues of poverty, population and development is promoted.

World Food Programme

39. The World Food Programme (WFP) intends to use the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty to highlight the developmental needs of the hungry poor and to increase the effectiveness of its poverty alleviation efforts at the country level. The major part of the activities of WFP in relation to the Year will take place at the country level in cooperation with all its partners - Governments, donors, non-governmental organizations and beneficiaries.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

40. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as a humanitarian agency providing assistance and protection to refugees, has important links with the issue of the eradication of poverty. As far as its resources allow, UNHCR is willing to join in with and support any activities undertaken by the United Nations system.

International Labour Organization

41. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is producing an updated version of the Compendium on Poverty Estimates (2nd edition), which would include indicators of social exclusion and cover developed and developing countries. ILO would also document success stories and focus on issues such as the bargaining power of the poor. Above all, the very strong link between poverty and unemployment and underemployment has been emphasized by the World Summit for Social Development. All activities of ILO have therefore a direct bearing on the reduction and eradication of poverty.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

42. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will convene a World Food Summit in November 1996 at Rome, with the aim of renewing the commitment of the world leaders at the highest level to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the achievement of food security for all, through

the adoption of concerted policies and actions at global, regional and national levels. The outcome of the World Food Summit is expected to be a major contribution to the eradication of poverty.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

43. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) plans analytical and policy-oriented work in the area of poverty in connection with the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Within the framework of collaboration between UNESCO and the International Social Science Council in its Programme of Comparative Research on Poverty, several publications are being prepared and a series of expert group meetings are being planned to launch some comparative research programmes. For publications in 1996, the following monographs are under preparation: Poverty: a Worldwide Review of Research; Images of Poverty; Law, Power and Poverty; a glossary of poverty; Poverty and Participation in Civil Society; and Feminization of Poverty.

44. The International Social Science Journal will dedicate its issue No. 148 (June 1996) to the theme of poverty. During 1996-97, workshops will be organized on: poverty and social exclusion in the Mediterranean, in Crete, Greece; the economics of poverty, at Bergen, Norway; human rights as an instrument for poverty alleviation, at Sao Paulo, Brazil; the role of the State in poverty alleviation, at Nairobi; and law, power and poverty at Onati, Spain.

45. Within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development a workshop is envisaged on culture and poverty that will provide guidelines for the subsequent activities relating culture, poverty and development. UNESCO will also be encouraging its regional social science organizations to focus on poverty during the Year, and intends to use the occasion of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in favour of its educational intervention in conflict situations by emphasizing the role of income-generating non-formal education in poverty eradication. In the draft programme and budget of UNESCO for 1996-1997, it is specifically foreseen that, in partnership with the United Nations system and grass-roots non-governmental organizations, projects aiming at strengthening endogenous capacities will be set up, with particular emphasis on active and voluntary participation of excluded groups such as unemployed, marginalized and poverty-stricken people through empowerment and training programmes. Seminars will be organized in five countries (Nicaragua, Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil and Peru) to discuss education and poverty. UNESCO will also support Member States in strengthening their social science infrastructures for developing endogenous capacities and for setting up relevant information, documentation and data on the impact of structural adjustment policies on the poor and on the effectiveness of anti-poverty strategies. UNESCO proposes to organize a clearing-house on policies and experiences which have proved effective in the fight against social exclusion. Broad synoptic regional reports assessing successful measures will be disseminated, in cooperation with the media, universities and other educational establishments, non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society.

46. There is a special focus in UNESCO programmes on fostering a better understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of poverty and contributing

to strategies for eradicating extreme poverty. An action-oriented project to fight poverty in South Asia is being developed, and a meeting comparing local strategies against poverty will be held in Costa Rica in the spring of 1996.

International Monetary Fund

47. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Fiscal Affairs Department is considering the compilation, in 1996, of various papers written in IMF on the role of social safety nets in poverty reduction. IMF, through its United Nations Office, will be represented at all future inter-agency meetings on the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

World Bank

48. The World Bank already has in place a process for helping countries articulate their poverty reduction strategies through the preparation of poverty assessments, public expenditure reviews and country assistance strategies. The Bank's operations increasingly involve interactions with the poor, principally through participatory poverty assessments, which mean talking to the poor directly, and through participatory project preparation and implementation. Some of the new initiatives the Bank is proposing for 1996 which are currently under consideration include an accelerated programme for children to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and some ideas in health (vaccine development and micro-nutrients). The Bank is also working to improve the effectiveness of the instruments it relies on to help countries reduce poverty, such as policy advice, technical assistance, project loans and policy loans.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

49. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has already begun preparations for the observance of the Year both at institutional level and through a number of public information activities. In its 18 years of operation, IFAD has designed and financed over 400 poverty alleviation projects in more than 100 countries across the developing world. In relation to the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the Fund is going to upgrade a number of already planned activities, such as project implementation workshops to include "lessons learned" and "best practices". IFAD is exploring cost-effective ways of enhancing the level of exchange with the poor by strengthening participatory mechanisms that will allow the poor to express their views, ideas and proposals on how best to strengthen the impact of poverty projects in order to raise their productivity and incomes. IFAD, along with other national and multilateral institutions, is also sponsoring in November at Brussels, the Conference on Hunger and Poverty. The major objective of the Conference is to allow institutions of civil society, especially non-governmental organizations, to join hands with multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and national institutions to combat hunger and poverty. At Brussels, IFAD hopes to build an operational coalition that will allow successful programmes against poverty to be identified, expanded and replicated. Within this context, IFAD is also collaborating with the World Bank to promote micro-financing programmes. Such programmes will be designed to pioneer new modalities for poverty eradication.

50. A number of activities will be undertaken within IFAD itself over the Year. The Fund's Latin America and the Caribbean Division is planning to start regional "discussions on poverty with the poor", to promote analysis of poverty issues from the poor's perspective and organize forums to discuss problems and solutions emerging at project level. Some regional and subregional IFAD technical assistance grants could also be used to organize regional and subregional events on poverty issues where the voice of the poor could be heard. Another global study on issues such as household food security, rural financing and desertification control will help in defining strategies for future poverty alleviation investments in the regions. IFAD is also preparing to hold a subregional workshop at Cape Town, South Africa on 30 and 31 January 1996 which will review the experiences of a large number of IFAD-supported projects. The workshop, in which poor groups as well as government officials and project staff, administrators and donors will be participants, will represent a demonstration of solidarity in a country just liberated from apartheid, to work for a world free from poverty. The event could also include an exposition of traditional and improved farmers' instruments, artisanal products of rural communities from various parts of the developing world, a photo exhibit, stands for publications, a video show and a musical programme, while the African and international media would cover the event through national and satellite television networks. The exposition planned for Cape Town would effectively be structured as a "mobile expo". It could then travel throughout the Year to destinations such as Beijing, Cairo, Dakar, London, Mexico City, Nairobi, New Delhi, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Riyadh, Rome, Tokyo and Washington, D.C., where it would arrive in time for the observance of the 1996 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

51. To mark the launching of the International Year, a special video "promo" and a video news release for distribution through Reuters satellite feeds and other channels would be produced in December 1995. In addition, a series of monthly 30-minute television programmes on various success stories in the fight against rural poverty in Africa would be developed. Moreover, a series of short documentaries on the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in developing countries in Arabic, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish for broadcast on the Euronews network is being planned. Other productions are under negotiation. An IFAD-sponsored workshop on environmental support to nomads and sustainable management of multi-purpose marginal land resources is scheduled to take place at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from 16 to 19 March 1996. In addition, IFAD is seeking to improve public awareness both in donor and recipient countries of the importance of solidarity and cooperation to eradicate poverty.

Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions

52. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), at its seventh session, in New York, took note of the work accomplished to date on poverty eradication and the positive response given to the report of the CCPOQ Working Group on Poverty on the work of the United Nations system on poverty alleviation. 11/ It decided to pursue these efforts on the basis of a three-day brainstorming workshop to be convened at the ILO Training Centre at Turin at the end of January 1996 to generate ideas on practical issues for follow-up. Some of the issues proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the workshop are: criteria for

identification of poverty groups; the geographical structures for such action; identification of the basic programmes; an understanding of the reasons for successes and failures of poverty programmes; and strategies for extending services and targeting benefits to the poor.

C. Activities by other organizations

53. The decision to designate 1996 International Year for the Eradication of Poverty was communicated to regional and international organizations outside the United Nations system, inviting them to take appropriate action in regard to its observance. Information made available from these organizations will be included in the newsletter and other informational material to be issued during the course of the Year.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

2/ E/1995/92.

3/ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, sect. C.

4/ Ibid., commitment 2.

5/ Ibid.

6/ Ibid., annex II, paras. 26 (b) and (d).

7/ Ibid., para. 83 (d).

8/ Ibid., paras. 95 (a) and (c).

9/ Ibid., annex I, sect. C, commitment 2.

10/ Ibid., annex II, para. 83 (d).

11/ ACC/1995/POQ/CRP.19, annex.